MARVEL

#14

SPENCER
SAIZ
ROSENBERG

Steve★Rogers CAPTAIN AMERICA®

Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve Rogers CAPTAIN AMERICA

Steve Rogers' reality has been secretly rewritten by Kobik, a sentient Cosmic Cube acting under the influence of the Red Skull. In Steve's new history, a Hydra agent named Elisa Sinclair enrolled Steve in a school where he was trained to believe in Hydra's ideals--and befriended a young Helmut Zemo. Later, Steve would return to the U.S. to become the first Super-Soldier and Hydra's ultimate spy, but he remained close friends with Helmut despite the distance--until Steve's ally Bucky killed Helmut's father, Heinrich Zemo.

In the present, Steve has won Zemo back, but Captain Marvel remains a thorn in his side. Steve is luring a massive horde of Chitauri invaders to Earth as part of his plan to increase Hydra's power, but Captain Marvel is nearly ready to implement a planetary defense shield that would keep them out. And elsewhere, Elisa Sinclair has mysteriously resurfaced...as Madame Hydra.

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1944.

IT IS A WONDROUS THING TO SEE YOUR DREAMS REALIZED.

AND YOU WERE ALWAYS MY MOST CHERISHED DREAM, DEAR CHILD.

TO SEE THAT SCARED LITTLE BOY GROW INTO A MAN--

--ONE WHO EMBODIES STRENGTH AND CONVICTION TO HIS VERY CORE...

...THAT FILLS MY HEART WITH PRIDE.

BUT TIME AND DISTANCE ARE STRANGE THINGS--

--AND THEY HAVE A WAY OF KEEPING US FROM WHAT WE LOVE.

OH MY-- I DON'T BELIEVE IT...

...STEVEN?

ELISA?

STEVEN!

IT'S REALLY YOU!

HAVE YOU COME TO **KILL** ME, THEN?

OH, HOW I HAVE MISSED YOU, MY SWEET BOY. BUT I KNOW--

--SOON, WE WILL BE REUNITED.

NOW. EGYPT.

SO...I AM STILL NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON WHAT THIS GIG IS.

YEAH, BLACK ANT'S RIGHT-- NICE TO BE OUT OF THE TASER WIRE AND ALL, BUT I GOT ***NO CLUE*** WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON.

I TOLD YOU, GENTLEMEN. THE PRICE FOR INTERFERING WITH HYDRA'S PLANS IS USUALLY DEATH, BUT I FIND MYSELF STRANGELY ***IMPRESSED*** BY YOU. HOW SUCH SIMPLETONS COULD, THROUGH SHEER AMBITION AND ***ACCIDENT,*** STUMBLE THEIR WAY TO THE ***WORLD'S GREATEST SECRET.***

INSPIRING, REALLY. SO INSTEAD OF KILLING YOU, I HAVE A JOB IN MIND.

YOU ARE TO SERVE AS MY PERSONAL GUARDS. AND IN THAT CAPACITY--

--YOU WILL FOLLOW ME TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

HM. AND NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, WHAT'S TO STOP US FROM JUST GUTTIN' YOU AND LEAVING YOU DOWN HERE, HONEY?

WELL, FOR ONE--

--A HEALTHY SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION, I'D IMAGINE.

@#!$!

GAH! THIS IS WORSE THAN THAT TIME I GOT BEDBUGS! AND THE SECOND TIME I GOT BEDBUGS!

OH, I GET IT--IT'S LIKE A PUZZLE--A SLIMY, CREEPY, WORMY PUZZLE.
S'GROSS.

[illegible]

:SNIFF SNIFF: HELLO, PRETTY MONSTER.

MY HIVE.

I OFFER YOU VIOLENCE.

MADRIPOOR.

FIRE!!!

TAKE THE HEADS, STRING THE BODIES ALONG THE PIER. LET EVERYONE SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY TRY TO MOVE ***THEIR*** PRODUCT INTO ***MY*** TERRITORY.

-SIGH- IS THIS ALL YOU ARE TO BE, THEN?

THE DEADLY VIPER--ONCE THE SUPREME HYDRA--NOW DIRTIES HERSELF IN THESE SLUMS, SLINGING OPIATES LIKE SOME LOWLY CRIMINAL...

IT'S ENOUGH TO BREAK A GIRL'S HEART.

THAT'S MY SUIT YOU'RE WEARING.

HH. WELL, PERHAPS YOU COULD TRY TO TAKE IT BACK FROM ME, DARLING--

--SHOW ME WHAT THE MAN I LOVED SAW IN YOU ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.

WHO ARE YOU?

SOMEONE WHO SEES YOU HAVE DRIFTED FOR TOO LONG, LITTLE ORPHAN CHILD--

--I OFFER YOU ***BELONGING.***

LOS ANGELES.

--AND SO YEAH, I'M THINKING ABOUT MAJORING IN PSYCHOLOGY, SURE--BUT I DUNNO--IT'S NOT REALLY VERY ***GLAMOROUS,*** IS IT?

MOMMY SAYS I DON'T EVEN ***NEED*** TO GO TO SCHOOL ANYMORE, NOW THAT SHE'S REMARRIED. AND I WAS THINKING ABOUT MAYBE JUST GOING FULL-TIME ON BUILDING MY ***INSTAGRAM BRAND--***

HMM. YES. WELL, HAVE A SEAT, MEGHAN, DEAR--PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOUR MIND REACH THE CLARITY IT NEEDS--AND WE CAN DISCUSS THE PLANS FOR YOUR ***INHERITANCE*** A BIT MORE, AS WELL--

UGH--

--JUST LIKE YOUR ***FATHER.*** HE WAS A MAN OF LOW AIMS AND AMBITIONS, AS WELL.

WE RARELY SAW EYE TO EYE.

WHAT THE DEVIL--?!

BUT I MUST ADMIT, HE ***DID*** HAVE HIS USES.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS, WHO ***IS*** THIS?! YOU SAID I WAS THE ONLY--

FAUSTUS. MY DEAR, YOU EVEN HAVE HIS TASTE FOR MELODRAMA.

YOU WILL LEAVE NOW. YOU WILL ***LEAVE--***

YOUR PARLOR TRICKS WON'T WORK ON ME, JOHANN. NOR SHOULD YOU WANT THEM TO. AFTER ALL, I COME WITH A GIFT--THE THING YOU'VE CRAVED THE MOST THROUGHOUT YOUR FRUSTRATED, INSIGNIFICANT LIFE...

I OFFER YOU ***INFLUENCE.***

JAPAN.

WHAT IS IT YOU ASK OF ME?

GREAT AND MIGHTY GORGON, WHOSE TERROR CASTS A SHADOW ACROSS THE SUN--

--YOU HAVE BEEN DEALT A ***GRAVE*** INJUSTICE.

MORE THAN ***ONE,*** WITCH.

BUT ALL OF THEM DERIVE FROM THE SAME LIE.

AS DO ALL OUR ASSOCIATIONS-- HYDRA, THE HAND, SO MANY OTHERS-- ALL RIVERS RUNNING TOWARD THE SAME SEA.

IF YOU JOIN US, WE WILL SET THIS RIGHT. WE WILL RESTORE YOUR EMPIRE AND MAKE YOUR ENEMIES INTO THE SANDS BENEATH YOUR FEET AS YOU REACH THE END OF YOUR KINGDOM.

THE SPEAR IN THE EAST, TOMI SHISHIDO--

--I OFFER YOU ***VENGEANCE.***

DIMENSION Z.

GAH!

AGH!

ARE YOU DONE PLAYING?

YOU INTRUDE UPON THE LAIR OF ***ARNIM ZOLA,*** WOMAN--A TRESPASS THAT IS A MOST GRAVE OFFENSE!

YES, YES, NO GIRLS ALLOWED...

...BUT INTERESTING HOW YOU TRAPPED THE LACKEYS BUT LEFT ME STANDING. I'LL ASSUME YOU'RE ENTERTAINING POSSIBILITIES, THEN.

ALL THESE CONTRAPTIONS-- THEY JUST LOOK LIKE TOYS. IF YOU ASK ME, ELECTRICITY ROBS TORTURE OF ITS PURITY.

AND THEN THERE'S THAT ***HUSK*** YOU INHABIT. TRYING TO AVOID WHAT WILL SURELY BE A ***NASTY FATE*** FOR THAT SOUL OF YOURS.

WON'T LAST ***FOREVER,*** OF COURSE. BUT THEN, ISN'T SCIENCE ALL ABOUT ADHERENCE TO LAWS?

WHAT IF I GAVE YOU THE MEANS TO ***REWRITE*** THOSE LAWS?

COME WITH ME, ZOLA--

--I OFFER YOU ***DISCOVERY.***

SCOTLAND.

I WILL ADMIT--THIS ISN'T EASY FOR ME.

THE MAN THIS SUIT BELONGED TO--HE MEANT A GREAT DEAL TO ME. BUT, CUT OFF ONE LIMB--

WELL, THE POINT IS I BELIEVE THERE IS VALUE IN LEGACY. IT WAS JUST A QUESTION OF FINDING A SUITABLE HEIR--

--AND YOU ***ARE*** FAMILY, AFTER ALL.

I SEE--

--AND DOES...***HE*** KNOW?

NO. AND HE NEVER WILL. HE BELIEVES YOU TO BE DEAD, AND SO THAT IS THE TRUTH OF IT. WHOEVER YOU WERE BEFORE, HE ***PERISHED*** LONG BEFORE THIS--

YOU ARE THE ***KRAKEN*** NOW. THE GHOST OF WORLDS LOST, THE KEEPER OF SECRETS--

I OFFER YOU ***MEANING.***

YES, WE WILL BE TOGETHER AGAIN, STEVEN. AND WHEN I SEE YOU, I WILL BRING WITH ME A GIFT...

...THE NEW HIGH COUNCIL OF HYDRA.

I HOPE OUR MEETING IS A HAPPY ONE.

I WAS JUST MAKING SOME TEA. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?

ELISA--

I KNOW, DEAR BOY. JUST--ALLOW A FEW MOMENTS. IT HAS BEEN **SO** LONG--

--AND I HAVE MISSED YOU SO DEARLY.

I ***HATE*** YOU SEEING LIKE THIS, THOUGH--SO ***ANGRY.*** THAT'S NOT MY LITTLE STEVEN.

ANGRY? MY BEST FRIEND IS SITTING IN AN ALLIED PRISON CELL. HE WON'T EVEN ***SPEAK*** TO ME. HIS FATHER--A MAN I GREATLY ADMIRED--IS ***DEAD.***

SO UNFORTUNATE. THIS IS WHY WAR IS SOMETHING TO AVOID, NOT RUSH TOWARD. I TRIED TO WARN THEM--

THEY'RE ***DEAD*** BECAUSE OF YOU!

SUCH CARELESS WORDS...

HELMUT KNEW--HE ***KNEW*** YOU WERE A TRAITOR--HE ***WARNED*** ME--

I WANT ***ANSWERS,*** ELISA--

CAREFUL NOW, **BOY**-- THERE IS A LIMIT TO **EVERYTHING**, INCLUDING MY LOVE.

I WILL ABIDE YOUR TONGUE, BUT THE LAST MAN TO LAY A HAND ON ME FOUND HIS SOUL BARGAINED OFF TO THE HELL-LORD...

I AM **MADAME HYDRA.** I DRANK THE BLOOD OF MY ENEMIES' FIRSTBORN WITH THE ANCIENT KINGS AND FELT THE STARS FALL...

I HAVE **DANCED** IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ELDER GODS AND SEEN THEM **SMILE** UPON ME. CHTHON OFFERED TO MAKE ME HIS **BRIDE**...

I HAVE REACHED BACK AND FELT THE DEMIURGE SHAPE THE UNIVERSE, AND ALL THE DARKNESS IN IT. IF I SOUGHT TO HARM YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS--

--BELIEVE THAT I COULD FIND A MORE DELIGHTFUL WAY TO DO IT. SO WILL YOU NOW LISTEN?

GGG-- YES--

GOOD. DRINK YOUR TEA, THEN.

NOW.
MICHIGAN.

"ALL RIGHT, ALPHA FLIGHT, LOOK ALIVE--THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON US."

I AM HEREBY AUTHORIZING A GO COMMAND ON THE FIRST OFFICIAL TEST OF OUR PRIDE AND JOY--

"--THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD."

SHIELD IS ONLINE AND OPERATIONAL MA'AM.

GOOD. LET'S GET STARTED, THEN--

MA'AM-- THE DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D. IS REQUESTING TO COME ON BOARD--

TELL MARIA--

OH, RIGHT. I SHOULD BE SO LUCKY.

CAROL--

COLONEL DANVERS.

DIRECTOR-SLASH-CAPTAIN ROGERS. GLAD YOU GOT THE ***EVITE***. I ASSUME YOU'RE HERE TO SEE SOME HISTORY GET MADE?

MAYBE--

"--OR MAYBE I JUST WANTED TO TRY TO TALK YOU OUT OF THIS ONE LAST TIME--

"--AFTER OUR ***LAST*** MEETING DIDN'T GO AS WELL AS I'D HOPED."

STEVE--I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERNS. REALLY, I DO. AND IF I FELT WE COULD ***AFFORD*** TO BE IDEALISTIC AT THIS MOMENT, I'D ***LISTEN*** TO THEM.

BUT EVERY DAY THE CHITAURI HORDE WIPES OUT ANOTHER SYSTEM ON THEIR WAY TOWARDS US--THIS SHIELD IS OUR ONLY ANSWER.

THIS IS WHAT THE WORLD ***NEEDS*** RIGHT NOW. AN END TO ALL THIS CRAZINESS. ***REAL*** STABILITY, WHERE PEOPLE CAN GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THE NEXT INVASION OR ATTACK. IMAGINE THAT.

SO EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT THRILLED ABOUT IT, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE--THIS WAY, WE GET TO SEE WHAT PEACE LOOKS LIKE, TOGETHER. NOW--

--LAUNCH THE NUKES!

"WE HAVE IMPACT--

"--SHIELD AT 99 PERCENT."

THIRTY NUCLEAR WARHEADS-- 99 PERCENT. NICE--

--BUT LET'S BRING THE ***BIG GUNS.***

MONICA-- YOUR TEAM SET?

ON YOUR MARK, CAR.

FULL POWER THEN--

"--LET'S GIVE THE WORLD A SHOW!"

SHIELD HOLDING AT 92 PERCENT, MA'AM!

FANTASTIC WORK, PEOPLE-- THIS CONCLUDES OUR FIRST--

ONE SECOND, COLONEL DANVERS--

YOU'VE MADE A LOT OF CLAIMS ABOUT THIS SHIELD. THAT IT CAN STAND UP TO THE LIKES OF ***GALACTUS,*** OR ***THE CELESTIALS.***

THIS IS A GOOD TEST--BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS, I'D LIKE TO RUN IT UP AGAINST SOMETHING ON THAT POWER LEVEL--

"--QUASAR'S ***QUANTUM BANDS.***"

YOU READY, AGENT KINCAID?

YES, SIR, CAPTAIN--

GOOD--

--GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT.

SHIELD AT 70 PERCENT, MA'AM.

"65 PERCENT.

"60...

COME ON, AVRIL...

"SHIELD AT... **51 PERCENT,** MA'AM! WE'RE--

"AGENT KINCAID?

"WE'RE NOT GETTING A RESPONSE--"

I'M SORRY I LET YOU DOWN, SIR.

YOU GAVE IT EVERYTHING YOU HAD, AGENT. SO YOU DIDN'T.

BUT THE SHIELD--

YOU LET **ME** WORRY ABOUT IT--

"--THERE ARE **OTHER** WAYS TO DEAL WITH THAT."

RICK JONES.

:SKRRZZT: HEY, CAP--

AH, BEFORE WE START, REAL FAST--"OBI-WAN KENOBI, YEARS AGO, YOU SERVED MY FATHER--"

RICK.

NO, SURE, OKAY. WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR?

YOU REMEMBER HOW I SAID I HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU? WELL, THIS IS IT--YOU LOOKED AT THE ***CYBERSECURITY*** ON THIS SHIELD?

I DID, AND I GOTTA TELL YOU--THIS IS NO MARIA HILL PRODUCTION. THEY'VE LOCKED IT DOWN NICE AND TIGHT.

I SEE. BUT YOU CAN GET THROUGH IT?

WELL, YEAH, IF PUSH CAME TO SHOVE--

IT'S A SHOVE. CAN YOU DO THIS FOR ME? I'M AFRAID CAPTAIN MARVEL IS MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES SHE MADE DURING THE CIVIL WAR. I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU AND I, RICK--

--WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT SHIELD **NEVER** GOES UP--

"--AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TRUST."

I AM **NOT** YOUR TRAITOR, STEVEN-- BUT ZEMO AND HIS SON WERE LED TO BELIEVE I WAS.

AND THAT LIE LED TO THEIR UNDOING. THEY DID NOT TELL ME WHERE THEY WERE GOING, SO I COULD NOT PROTECT THEM, YOU UNDERSTAND?

BUT IF THAT'S TRUE--THEN WHO IS IT? YOU MUST KNOW--

YOUR TEA IS GETTING COLD...

ELISA--

--IF THERE'S A THREAT TO HYDRA, I **NEED** TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

I UNDERSTAND, STEVEN, IT'S JUST-- THE SIGHT HAS SHOWN ME WHERE THIS PATH WILL LEAD YOU. AND I--I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE YOU ENDURE SUCH PAIN...

YOU LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT--THIS IS WHAT I WAS MEANT TO DO, REMEMBER?

I KNOW, DARLING, I KNOW. HE WAS SO **PROUD** OF YOU. BEFORE HE LEFT--HE TOLD ME. WE ALL WERE...

ELISA. WHO BETRAYED US?

HE IS THE GREATEST DANGER YOU, OR HYDRA, HAVE EVER FACED. YOU HAVE HEARD HIS NAME ONLY IN WHISPERS, BUT NOW YOU MUST CONFRONT HIM--

"--THEY CALL HIM THE *RED SKULL.*"

NEXT

ZEMO'S "RETURN OF THE MASTERS" CONTINUES IN

THE STORY EXPANDS IN

THUNDERBOLTS #10

THUNDERBOLTS #11

UNCANNY AVENGERS #22

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #25

ZONE